

Utah Statewide Mercury Work Group

Minutes of September 14, 2005 Meeting
10:30 a.m. to noon Room 201, DEQ Bldg #2
(168 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City)

1. **Introductions - John Whitehead, Division of Water Quality (DWQ).** Mr. Whitehead welcomed attendees and asked individuals to introduce themselves to the group (attendance list attached).
2. **Introductory Remarks - Walt Baker, DWQ Director.** Mr. Baker welcomed the group and thanked them for their interest and participation. He said that he envisioned the group employing a collaborative, science-based, comprehensive and transparent approach to address mercury-related issues in Utah. Mr. Baker briefed the group of the recent history of mercury monitoring by the state and EPA, and discussed the state's recent fish consumption advisories issued for Mill Creek and Gunlock Reservoir.
3. **Ground rules for work group operation - John Whitehead.** The following ground rules were discussed:
 - a. meetings are open
 - b. meetings start on time and end on time
 - c. mutual respect of participants
 - d. no side conversations
 - e. no interruption of speakers
 - f. 30-day prior notice for meetings recommended
 - g. meeting minutes will be in summary form
 - h. resource constraints must be recognized
 - i. the decision making process will strive to be as consensus-based as possible. If consensus cannot be reached, day-to-day type decisions must be approved 2/3 majority. Major policy decisions such as formal recommendations to the Water Quality Board must be approved by 3/4 majority. The minority decision will also be documented and forwarded for these decisions.
 - j. Members agree to represent their constituency by:
 - i. maintaining a two way flow of information between the workgroup and their constituency
 - ii. Understanding and communicating their authority to represent their constituency.
 - iii. having an alternative representative designated to attend workgroup meetings

A recommendation was made to consider the use of a third party neutral facilitator. The use of a private consultant was discussed as well as the possibility of US Forest

Service facilitation staff was mentioned as a possibility. DWQ staff agreed to review options and costs and report back to the group on the topic at the next meeting as a possible.

4. **Purpose and goals of the work group.** John Whitehead distributed a draft purpose and goals statement. He stressed that the document was open to comments and was intended as a starting point for discussion. The group discussed several issues including:

- a. the possibility of bringing in an expert from another state that has had a long history of dealing with Mercury issues.
- b. several members suggested that it would be useful to sample macroinvertebrates, sediments, etc., in order to better understand the whole picture of Hg in the environment. Other members felt that due to human health concerns, it was more appropriate, initially, to focus on sampling organisms being consumed by people.
- c. concern that the workgroup not limit data collection by other private and non-profit groups. That we focus on developing a protocol.
- d. good protocols currently exist for mercury sampling and analysis. Do not reinvent.
- e. in the interest of time, John Whitehead asked that members e-mail him with any additional comments with two weeks.

5. **Status report - current information on Hg in fish and waterfowl in Utah - Clay Perschon , Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) and John Whitehead, DWQ.** Clay discussed current effort being conducted by DWR to sample waterfowl. He discussed factors such as migration patterns and feeding habits of different species as well as hunter habits and described how these factors were taken into consideration by the sampling strategy. He also discussed sampling and analysis of brine shrimp in the Great Salt Lake as part of a cooperative effort between DWR, USGS and Utah State University.

John Whitehead gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the findings of the current fish tissue data set and outlined ongoing data collection efforts.

6. **Sub-committees.** John Whitehead introduced the concept of forming subcommittees to address specific tasks. A subcommittee was formed to prepare sampling protocols for fish and waterfowl. Allen Hash, Jeff Salt, Randy Radant, Scott Everett, Clay Perschon, Jason Scholl , Richard Denton, and Teresa Gray agreed to serve on the subcommittee.

Wayne Ball agreed to give a presentation at the next meeting on the current protocol used by his office to issue fish consumption advisories.

7. **USGS/USFWS Grant Proposal – Long-term mercury deposition in Nevada and Utah with implications to aquatic biota and potential human health effects - Dave Naftz, USGS.** Dave gave a PowerPoint presentation summarizing current

and proposed research being conducted by the USGS and USFWS to address Mercury issues. He requested assistance from any group who would like to participate as a cooperator in the study.

8. **Discussion of other groups/agencies that should be represented on the Work Group.** John Whitehead asked members to e-mail him with the names of any additional stakeholders that should be participating in the workgroup.
9. **Next meeting.** The next meeting of the workgroup was scheduled for November 10th, 2005 at 9:00 am.

Attendees - Mercury Work Group Meeting - 9/14/05

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